



NEWS RELEASE

Tennessee Regulatory Authority

Media Contact:

Greg Mitchell, 741-2904 ext. 131
Email: greg.mitchell@state.tn.us

For Release: September 16, 2005

Timely Aid for Hurricane Katrina Evacuees: Lifeline, Link-Up and TDAP

Nashville, Tennessee – As part of the outpouring of assistance, hospitality and kindness Tennesseans have shown to the evacuees affected by Hurricane Katrina that have relocated to the State, the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) today sent information to TEMA and shelters hosting evacuees in an effort to inform our newest residents of three assistance programs that will make their transition to Tennessee easier: *Lifeline* and *Link-Up* and the *Telecommunications Devices Access Program* (TDAP).

Lifeline and *Link-Up* are federally established telephone assistance programs designed to make telephone service affordable for low-income consumers. Under the *Lifeline* program, an amount of up to \$13.50 is deducted monthly from the local-service portion of the subscriber's telephone bill. With *Link-Up*, subscribers receive a one-time credit of one-half the cost (up to a maximum of \$30.00) of installing new or transferred service.

The *Telecommunications Devices Access Program* permits the TRA to purchase and distribute communications devices to individuals whose disabilities restrict the use of a standard telephone. Devices such as tele-type (TTY), telebraille, and amplified telephones are distributed through TDAP at no cost to the consumer.

"Lifeline, Link-Up and TDAP were designed to meet the particular needs of Tennessee consumers," says TRA Chairman Ron Jones. "The victims of Hurricane Katrina who are becoming residents of our State too have particular needs that hopefully can be aided by these three programs, and we are honored to help in any way we can."

Persons qualify automatically for the *Lifeline* and *Link-Up* programs if they receive food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid or meet certain income requirements. Eligibility requirements for TDAP include verification of a disability along with a completed application.

Persons interested in participating in the *Lifeline* and *Link-Up* programs who are currently enrolled in the assistance programs mentioned above should contact their local telephone service provider directly. Those who wish to enroll in either program based on income should contact the TRA at 1-800-342-8359 Ext. 205. Persons interested in

obtaining equipment through TDAP should contact the TRA at 1-800-342-8359 Ext. 179 for an application (TTY users should dial 1-888-276-0677). For more information about these programs, visit the TRA at www.state.tn.us/tra.

#